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Sanctification as All Inclusive

Article VI of the Augsburg Confession on the new obedience says that faith necessarily produces good works for the sake of God's commands and immediately adds the demur that we are not to trust in them. Article IV on justification reverses the order and warns that works have no place in justification and only then defines it. Lutherans rarely deviate from this approach in any discussion on sanctification. What starts out as a discussion on sanctification reverts to one on justification in which it is made clear that works have no part. Putting a more positive twist on things, works do not constitute faith, but without them faith is nonexistent. James said as much. Faith without works is dead or really no faith at all (2:17, 26). In the dogmatic sequence sanctification follows and is the result of being justified by faith, but it is not all that simple.

Sanctification, involves such topics (loci) in the dogmatic spectrum beginning with the doctrine of God, that is, theology in the narrow sense, including the Trinitarian life; predestination; anthropology including the restoration of the image of God in believers; Christology, in that Jesus is the perfection, embodiment and source of all good works; the sacraments through which the Holy Spirit effects the good works God requires; and eschatology, in that at the judgment we will be assessed by our good works. Then mankind as it is embodied in the church will reach and excel the holiness that was once Adam's.[1]

Sanctification embraces and permeates the entire theological task and like justification has a determinative role in how theology is pursued. In the Scriptures no doctrine is given in isolation from another, but one doctrine is intertwined with and imbedded in another. To use catechism language one doctrine is in, with, and under another. For example Matthew's institution of the supper contains that gospel's most explicit description of the atonement in that the blood Jesus gives in the cup is the same blood Jesus sacrificed to God so sins could be forgiven (26:28). Atonement, sacrament and forgiveness constitute one reality. So also sanctification is presented in, with, and under other doctrines. Though dogmatics lays out its task in topics of loci, the Scriptures do not.

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The Triumph of Justification and Its Negatives

Since the beginning of the Reformation, Lutherans have had to fight a rear guard action in defending that justification is without works. So the Augsburg Confession set out to convince Catholic opponents that good works are not superfluous. From there matters went from bad to worse. In less than fifty years differences among Lutherans had to be resolved in the Formula of Concord in the articles on the righteousness of faith (III), good works (IV), law and gospel (V) and the law's third use (VI). With justification seen as the chief article, discussions on other articles soon reverted to this one. This has not been without its negative consequences, since the chief doctrine for some came to be regarded as the only one. Rudolph Bultmann's existential view of justification allowed biblical history to become expendable. This took form in gospel reductionism that first led to the formation of Seminex and then of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.[2]

Arguments for ordaining women are varied, but a prominent one is that any law disallowing the practice is superceded by the gospel which makes men and women equal before God. Agreement in the gospel was seen as sufficient for Lutheran churches to establish fellowship with churches in the Reformed tradition. Common to these arguments is that gospel trumps the law that has no place in sanctification. This was reason enough for some to challenge the third use of the law as set down in Article VI of the Formula.

God as the Source of Sanctification

One of the more valuable assignments from seminary days came from the late Arthur Carl Piepkorn: write a theological discourse on a collect. Though brief, the ancient collects are gems in showing how one aspect of theology is involved in another. The Collect for Peace sees the origin of sanctification in God: "all holy desires, good counsels, and all just works . . . proceed" from God. The one for Palm Sunday holds up Christ as the origin and example of the sanctification. Christ took upon himself "our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility." It defines sanctification by Christ's humility, and we petition God to "mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience and also be partakers of his resurrection." Following the example of Christ's humility in suffering is rewarded by our sharing in his resurrection.

Setting forth Christology, sanctification, and resurrection as parts of one reality follows a pattern proposed by Paul. "[God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (Col 1:30). Faith produces good works, but it comes at the end and not the beginning. It is not a thing or quantity but Christ working in believers. Faith has no autonomous existence, but like justification and redemption, sanctification has a prior (universal, objective) existence in Christ, even before we come to faith.

While we struggle with residual sin and unbelief as individuals, sanctification like justification is complete in the church as Christ's body. We confess but do not see the church as una sancta. The true humanity of the collect "which follow[s Christ's] patience" is the church. God destined us in Christ Jesus to do good works and so we cannot take credit for them. What God works in us is present in Christ (Eph 2:10). Though from our perspective our good works are incomplete, from God's perspective they are complete. Seeing perfection in ourselves is the sin of the Pharisees (Lk 18:9).

Sanctification as Christology

A christological understanding of sanctification was essential to Jesus's preaching. Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ arose in response to unacceptable options that he was simply another prophet. This led Jesus to predict his death and resurrection with the understanding that his disciples will follow him in taking up their crosses. Believers are like Jesus in that losing their lives, they gain them. One sure way to lose them is attempting to keep them (Mt 16:13–26).

A discourse on sanctification also emerges in Jesus's third prediction of his death and resurrection. A request from the mother of James and John for special places in Jesus's kingdom ignites a quarrel among the others about the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus responds that such ambition common among pagans has no place among his followers who are to follow Jesus in serving others just as he served in giving his life as a ransom. As Matthew and Mark present it, Jesus makes his death for others a subcategory of sanctification and that death is a pattern for the death of his followers (Mt 20:20–28; Mk 10:42–45).

Paul's ode to Christ's humiliation in his taking on a human form to the point of dying an excruciating death follows an admonition to quarreling Philippians to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:1–12). To address the question of the propriety of eating meat offered to idols, Paul cites the Shema Israel, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." In Deuteronomy 6:4 God's exclusive claim to deity is contrasted with polytheism and so participation in pagan rites is forbidden. Paul, always the master theologian, turns the argument around. Idols have no existence, so eating meat offered to them is allowed. He then expounds on the Shema to give a Trinitarian definition of God identifying the one God as the Father and the one Lord as Jesus (1 Cor 8:6).[3]

Sanctification as Trinitarian and Sacramental

Martyrdom as living and then dying for others is the highest form of sanctification. Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:13–14). He was referring first to himself and then his followers whom he calls his friends.[4] This theme also begins and concludes the Beatitudes.

The poor to whom the kingdom of the heavens belongs are those who are persecuted for Jesus's sake and this persecution comes with the promise of reward (Mt 5:3, 10–12). Self-giving in martyrdom is the most profound form of sanctification because it

mirrors and flows from the Father's offering the Son as an eternal sacrifice for sin (Heb 9:12) and in the Son's willing compliance to the Father's will.

Origins for our sanctification lie further back in God's Trinitarian existence in the Father eternally begetting the Son. From this inner Trinitarian relationship comes the sacrificial love by which the Father sends the Son into the world. Redemptive love originates in the Father giving of himself in begetting the Son and in this shows himself to be the Father. From the mutual love of the Father and the Son for each other, the Spirit is sent into our hearts so that we recognize God as Father (Gal 4:6) and now we do the works of God (Jn 5:20). In loving us by sending the Son and the Spirit to do the works of God, the Father is not engaged in an arbitrary work. This is not alien to what he is. Rather in loving us, God is doing what he is. So in our loving others, we replicate and extend God's love in Christ into the world. Good works come from faith, but we can with equal conviction say they have prior origin in Christ's giving himself for us and before that in God's Trinitarian existence.

Sanctification has sacramental dimensions. Christ speaks of his death as baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!" (Lk 12:50). In Matthew, Jesus describes his death of drinking the cup from which his disciples will also drink (Mt 20:22–23). Mark brings Luke and Matthew together so that in their deaths, Jesus's followers will share in the bitter cup of his crucifixion and be baptized into his death. Here Mark shows himself as a brilliant theologian in making baptism and the supper not only the source but the destiny of the Christian life.[5]

While we are accustomed to putting baptism before the supper, Mark reverses the order in which the supper as participation in Christ's death and its proclamation precedes baptism which corresponds to Christ's burial that is then consummated by resurrection. Sacramental participation in Christ concludes in the believer's death, burial and resurrection. So also Paul says in Romans 6:4-5,

> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

In the Book of Hebrews the Holy Communion is presented as a source of good works. Christ's resurrection and our receiving the blood in Holy Communion by which he made atonement to God and our sanctification in our doing the works God desires constitute one reality.

> Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.[6]

One can hardly argue with the Catholics in the *Confutation* that works "proceed from the merits of Christ's passion,"[7] but locating the role of the law in sanctification is

another matter. Mention of the law's third use introduces disagreement over its origin and meaning.[8] Though the Formula's discourse on the third use might need expansion, its definition is clear that believers "without command, threat, or reward" do the works of the Spirit.

Threats presented in the second use have been removed by what God accomplished in Christ and the law takes on the positive character not unlike what Adam knew, but this cannot simply be called the third use which is law fulfilled by Christ. This would be law in its the primeval or primitive sense in which the will of man conformed to the will of God. Luther argues that speaking of the righteous Adam before the fall requires that he knew the law, but this was different from the last given to the unrighteous Adam.[9]

Calvin defines the third use as God using the threats of law to prod believers to do good works.[10] Threats of the law supplement the promises of the gospel; call it the carrot and stick method. What the gospel cannot do by itself, the law does and so the gospel is confused with the law. To avert this perversion that law as accusation has a place in the sanctified life, some have denied the law's third use or at least redefined it. For example, Lowell C. Green and Timothy Wengert define the third use of the law as no more than the first and second uses applied to Christians.[11] This preserves the phrase, the third use, but substitutes another meaning. By devoting more space to the law's accusatory function, Article Six of the Formula opens the way to let the third use slip into the second (SD VI, 21–22).

Luther provides a way out of the dilemma by regarding the law as only accusation (second use) in his explanations of the Ten Commandments which not only list prohibitive behaviors, but begin with a call to faith, that is, the gospel. Fearing, trusting, and loving God, above all things, praying to him, and believing his word are what faith is all about. Then follows the description of the life of sanctification, what the third use of the law is all about: honoring parents, helping neighbors in their needs, improving their property and business and speaking well of them. Since each explanation begins with fearing and loving, faith is the context of the sanctified life. By beginning with faith followed by the warning against falling into sins, the order of the *simul iustus et peccator* is preserved. What God requires are descriptions of what we have become by faith. Imperatives or subjunctives are nothing less than the indicatives describing what we already are, what we are capable of doing, what we indeed do and what we must do.

The Image of God: Its Loss and Restoration

Made in the image of God Adam perfectly corresponded to who God was and this correspondence was reflected in man's relation to others and to the creation. In that brief primeval time the law resembled what is called the third use with this proviso that by Christ's death the second use of the law as accusation morphed into the third use.

Adam's sin was unique in that he took all mankind down with him and it was different from transgressing a moral infringement such as killing or stealing. His infraction was that in desiring to be like God he attempted to remove the boundary separating him from his creator. His offense was a First Article one, if we dare speak like that. He

was discontent with his condition as creature. To make matters worse, in his ambition to become God's equal, he lost the image that made him like God. To borrow ancient church language, in desiring to be *homoousios*, Adam was no longer *homoioousios*.

In the moment of transgression the law that was descriptive of what Adam actually was transformed into accusation of what he was not and so the *lex semper accusat* was born and would continue to reign wherever sin spread. Brother killing brother gave birth to the first use. Without the first use prohibiting one person from destroying another, society would not be possible.

These prohibitions were clarified for Israel in the Ten Commandments. By faith the image of God is being restored in believers, not as Adam possessed it, but as Christ enhanced it. By his life Jesus showed himself to be the true Adam and by his death removed from us the curses placed on the first Adam (Col 1:15). Now the third use of the law, almost in the way that Adam knew it, becomes the norm for sanctification. In Christ we see God differently than when we were sinners, but since we still sin, we have a double vision. We still see the law as accusation, but in Christ we see the law as Adam once saw it and begin to see God as he really is.[12]

Good Samaritan as Divine Figure

Since Jesus or God is the lawgiver (depending on how James 4:12 is interpreted and I prefer the former) the law reflects who and what he is, a revelation of what God is in himself. Law is not arbitrary. God cannot act contrary to who he is.

The parable of the Good Samaritan tells us as much about God and Christ as it does about sanctification (Lk 10:30–36.) Jesus's answer to the lawyer's question that he is to help the stricken neighbor is an exposition of Christians helping others in distress. In terms of the catechism, the Samaritan helps the neighbor in his bodily need. At the same time the parable is a description of what God is and does in Jesus and it belongs to the loci of theology in the narrow sense, that is, what we know about God, and of Christology.

The Samaritan's lavish, unlimited generosity in giving the innkeeper a blank check to cover the expenses of the stricken man is a more appropriate description of God who completely gives of himself in rescuing those who could never rescue themselves than it is of us. On one level sanctification is about how Christians are to live, but it has a prior reality in what God has always done and specifically his giving himself in Christ for us. In our sanctified lives God extends his mercy to the distressed.

This takes us back to the prior discussion on the Trinity because it requires that we take seriously that God loves because he is love and out of this love he begets the Son. Creation, redemption, and ultimately, our sanctification originate in God's Trinitarian existence. The *opera Trinitatis ad extra* are distinct from the *opera Trinitatis ad intra*, with the understanding that through *opera ad extra* extend the *opera ad intra* into our existence. What God is and does is completed in sanctification. "God is love. . . . His love is perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:8, 12).

A preferred translation is that in us God's love has reached its telos, its goal, its intended and ultimate purpose.[13] In ourselves we find sin and condemnation for our

transgressing the law, but God sees perfection in those who are in Christ. Perfection in sanctification which we have by faith exists side by side with that total imperfection we find in ourselves. Self-reflection creates despair or Phariseeism. From the dilemma of the *iustus et peccator* there is no escape.

Law and Gospel as Insoluble Dilemma

Relief from our misery can only be found in that our helpless condition has been relieved by Christ. Now comes the letdown. In the moment of ecstatic joy in finding rescue in the gospel, we are again confronted by the law. What at first looked like a commutation turns out to be a reprieve and we are caught in a revolving door of alternating words of condemnation and reprieve. As soon as we think we are extricated from the law by the gospel, the door makes a full rotation and we find ourselves face to face with the law as accusation. Christian life, at least as Lutherans see it, has all the marks of a tragic comedy. At the moment of confidence given in the gospel, the rug is pulled out from us and we face a God who has no use for us.

This tragic existence is not without salvific purpose. Without the internal torment provided by how God deals with us in law and the gospel, Christians will think they are acceptable to God for what *they* have done. Our sanctification is acceptable to God not because of what we have accomplished. Rather our sanctification was present in Christ before the world's foundation and now God in Christ works in us. As Paul says, Christ is as much our sanctification as he is our righteousness. In being continually rejected and accepted by God, justification is the most existential of all Christian doctrines and accounts for the misery to which we are sentenced as long as we live.[14]

If law has a negative connotation among Christians, this is also so for non-Christians. Preaching the law means letting the other person have it. In our litigious culture, law as accusation takes precedence. In the controversy with Rome, Lutherans gave pride of place to the law's accusatory function, which some argue is its only function. In today's theological climate this has not been without its consequences. Norms disallowing the ordination of women have been pushed to the side and churches are blessing same-sex marriage. To misapply Paul, against these there is no law.[15]

Lex Semper Accusat?

Support for seeing the law as a monstrous negative in the lives of Christians is found in the Apology, *lex semper accusat*, and reinforced by the next line that the law "always shows us that God is angry."[16] This citation provided reason for some Lutherans to challenge the law's normative function in sanctification and dismissing Article VI of the Formula as not in line with Luther's thought. Some firmly committed to the Lutheran Confessions may be guilty of the same infraction. In letting law's accusatory function predominate in their preaching, they in effect nullify the third use. Here the *simul iustus et peccator* helps to clarify.

As sinners we know the law only as accusation from which we cannot escape, but as believers we see the law in a totally positive sense in our being conformed to what God is and wants. Readjusting the language of the Athanasian Creed that Jesus is per-

fect God and perfect man, Christians are perfect saints in performing the things that are completely acceptable to God, but as sinners they are as wretched as anyone else. Here the image of a revolving door helps. Just as the Christian finds himself doing the right thing, he finds himself doing the wrong thing first in his thoughts and then in his words and actions. A thing done to others for the sake of God becomes a thing done for oneself. We see ourselves, and not God, as the source of good things we do. Now comes the question of how absolute is the lex semper accusat. In looking at what follows, we may find this absoluteness is not all that absolute. "Therefore God is not loved until we grasp his mercy by faith; not until then does he become someone who can be loved."[17]

Removing the *simul* from *simul iustus et peccator* creates a Eutychian sanctification, an homogenized *mixtum compositum*, a *tertium*, in which sinner and saint are blended into one thing or person, so that sanctification can be quantitatively measured. Believers can track and record their moral improvement in diaries and their progress can awake the admiration of others. Here the Catholic canonization of saints and Wesleyan perfectionism are on the same page. Jesus warned against the deliberate display of piety.

A variant of this view is that believers, as everyone else, have a body and soul. But in baptism they acquire a third item called the "spirit" or the "new man" with an almost autonomous existence that increases in holiness by abstaining from sin. This view of the autonomous new man allows and, at least for Calvin who holds that the new man is lazy, requires not only the gospel but the threats of law for good works.[18] The Scriptures do not know this view. Rather, given in baptism the new man is Christ himself. As Charles Gieschen says, "For Paul 'the new man' is not 'the new self' (ESV), but he is Christ in the Christian and at work in the Christian by virtue of the baptismal union (Gal 2:20)"[19]

As sinners, Christians and non-Christians can know the law in either the first or second uses as accusation, *lex semper accusat*, but by faith another reality comes into play. Believers become one with Christ and see the law not only as a pattern for their lives but also as a description of God. What God is the believer becomes, and what God *does* the believer does and thus the believer lives according to the law. In the believer the law's third use takes form, if we dare speak like this, and I think we can, since Paul does: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).

Problematic is that using "third use of the law" terminology we impose a sixteenth-century term on first-century literature. Just as the word "law" has various meanings, such as Torah, Scriptures, and even the gospel, so the phrase "the third use of the law" has acquired another meaning as when it is interpreted to mean the law accuses believers. Even those who are committed to the law's third use may in their attempt to preach the third use really be preaching the second use.

Had the Formula spelled out the christological character of the law's third use in more detail, the second and third uses may have remained more distinct from each other. Where this happens, the *lex semper accusat* lurks as such an absolute theological principle that the third use is not fully expressed. Law known as accusation and threat has a place in civil righteousness and justification. Left to itself *lex semper accusat* results in dualism, a Manicheanism, a bifurcated God, with two opposing wills, a good one

revealed in the gospel and a condemnatory one in the law or two gods or two eternally opposing principles.

In our fallen condition the law always accuses, but it is diagnostic in bringing us to our senses about our estrangement from God. In this sense the law as accusation is an act of mercy so that in the gospel we recognize that God has already supplied in Christ a solution to our wretched condition. Though the Formula outlines the law's three functions, law in itself is God's unchanging will according to which we human beings are to conduct ourselves in this life (VI, 16). As sinner, one is condemned by the law, but as believer one comes to see the law differently and loves it and by faith intuitively does the positive things the law it requires and so in the sense of the third use Christians fulfill the law. This is sanctification.

Sanctification or the Third Use of the Law as Possibility and Accomplishment

For the most part the law-gospel paradigm defines LCMS preaching and in some cases serves as an outline. Such a sermon begins with law alerting the congregation to their aberrations and predictably ends with the gospel relieving the pain imposed by the law.[20] Time allotted to the law is monopolized by the second use and little time, if any, is left for its third use or sanctification, that is, what the people should do. Should good works be specified—this is what the law's third use is all about—some preachers are quick to remind their hearers of the impossibility of doing good works, and so, the second use is substituted for the third that is in effect denied. In contrast, Paul's epistles often unabashedly conclude with the third use.

When Phoebe comes, the Romans are to help her as befits the saints (Rom 16:1). Contributions from the Corinthians are expected (1 Cor 16:1–2). The Galatians are to bear one another's burden's (Gal 6:1). Paul commends the Philippians for their generosity and calls these gifts sacrifices (Phil 4:18–22). Colossians are to be gracious in their speech (4:1). First Thessalonians lists respect for the clergy among the good works Christians are to do (5:13). Second Thessalonians requires idle members of the congregation to substitute that idleness with work that helps others (3:6–13.) Paul's anticipation of financial support from the Romans (15:22–29) is an appropriate follow-up to his asking them to present their bodies as living sacrifices (12:1).

Following the lead of Horace Hummel, Scott Ashmon wonders if sermons can follow a law-gospel-law pattern that he finds in the Old Testament instead of law-gospel. He supports his argument from the Formula of Concord and C. F. W. Walther who says the gospel "is followed by an instruction regarding things we are to do after we have become new men."[21]

Sarah Hinlicky Wilson provides an attractive solution: the law is instructional in its political or first use in coercing behavior and in its third use in laying out the good things that only believers do; in its second use the law is relational in its condemnation for which the gospel is the only solution.[22] In his fulfillment of the law by his life and death, Christ provides the perfect and only model for sanctification. Sacrifice is the ideal synonym for sanctification.

Sanctification and the Judgment

Sanctification presupposes refrain from sin; as James says, "keep oneself unstained from the world" (1:27). Paul details works of the flesh as "fornication, impurity, licentiousness" and so on, and adds that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19–21). Outward morality is part of sanctification, but Paul makes it clear that he will never be able to conquer evil and do all the good he desires (Rom 7:19). In fact he calls himself the chief of sinners, a term he uses for those who do heinous things (1 Tm 1:9–15).

However, the principal distinguishing mark of sanctification is doing good things such as caring for widows and orphans in their affliction (Jas 1:27). Here James seems to have in mind Jesus's discourse on the final judgment in which those who have cared for the hungry and naked and visited them on their sick beds and in prisons are rewarded by being placed at Jesus's right hand (Mt 25: 35–40). These things they have done without either thought of reward or unawareness that they have done them to Jesus. The writer of Hebrews may have had this judgment scene in view in defining brotherly love as remembering those who are in prison and ill-treated (Heb 13:3). Those who visit the imprisoned share in the prisoner's suffering because both are in Christ's body. So suffering as sanctification has an ecclesial dimension as well as a christological one. Christ is on both sides of the sanctification equation. Jesus is as much the doer of the good works as he is the recipient.

Roman Catholics look at sanctification almost as an account that can be increased by good works and depleted by sins. Moral deficits can be balanced by what the Augsburg Confession calls childish works "such as rosaries, the cult of the saints, joining religious orders, pilgrimages appointed fasts, holy days, and brotherhoods" (AC XX, 20). Serious deficits can be rectified by applying for the good works of the saints. Should faith later take hold, works done in the pre-sanctification period can be credited to one's account. In response to Catholics who saw salvific value in ritual or liturgical acts, Luther with his doctrine of vocation secularized sanctification or, to put it another way, he sanctified the secular life. Ordinary tasks of believers are good works, but this insight does not exhaust the doctrine of sanctification.[23]

"You Will Be Perfect"

Informative for defining sanctification is the pericope of the rich young man applying for tenured-track apostleship. His question of how one inherited the kingdom should not be occasion for a sermon on his deficient understanding of justification, especially since Paul says that those who do gross sins shall not inherit the kingdom of God. We might be satisfied with his claim that he has met the first qualification in having kept the commandments, but Jesus is not. Such concerns distract from the purpose of the narrative that he disqualified himself in refusing to sell his possessions to give them to the poor (Mt 19:16–21; Mk 10:17–14; Lk 18:18–23).[24] In terms of the Sermon on the Mount, he chose mammon over God (Mt 6:24). This conversation gives reason to the disciples who have given up everything to follow Jesus to ask about their rewards. Questions from the disciples can earn Jesus's reprimand, but in this case he promises

them thrones next to his and then expands the promise to include other followers.[25]

A clue to what is intended by perfection in sanctification can be found in Jesus's challenge to the young man, "If you would be perfect [Εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι]" (Mt 19:21). The English translation might allow the view that Jesus was requiring moral perfection if it were not for what follows, "Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor." Only then would he have treasure in heaven. Jesus defines perfection as depriving oneself to help the poor. In place of "if you would be perfect," Luke substitutes, "one thing you still lack" (18:22), and Mark follows Luke but with another word for "lack" (10:21). The absence of external moral fault qualifies him for apostleship. He is academically and theologically qualified, but lacks the perfection that requires him to give up his possessions to help those who have nothing.

This understanding is supported by what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, "You will be perfect as your Father in the heavens is perfect" (5:48),[26] a passage used to present the law as accusation when the assigned pericope proves to be inadequate for this purpose. If some use "be perfect" to show the impossibility of fulfilling the law, that is, its second use, and as introduction to the part of the sermon providing relief in the gospel, Arminians use the passage to show that moral perfection is an attainable goal. In Matthew 5:48, "be perfect" is future indicative and not an imperative. Claiming the future indicative has an imperative sense is playing fast and free with the grammar to support an already determined conclusion that this is law. "Be perfect" is not law but a promise of a future condition, a promise of what we will be.[27]

Preceding contexts in both Matthew (5:38–47) and Luke (5:31–35) speak of us loving our enemies—the good, the bad and the ungracious—just as God loves them. God's perfection is seen in the perfection of believers who forgive as he forgives and love as he loves. Matters are clinched or at least should be by Luke's interpretative parallel, "You will be perfect, as your Father is merciful" (10:36).[28] Perfection is not a matter of the second use of the law giving God opportunity to accuse the sinner, but the third use in that the believer is promised to be like the Father of Jesus in his indiscriminating love and forgiveness. Sanctification exists primarily in God and then in believers who by forgiving others are recognized as his true children. Any idea that believers can totally overcome sin is ruled out in the words of Jesus "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:11). So also in Luke 11:13.

An image opposite to the young man who could not give his wealth to follow Jesus is found in Paul's description of Jesus, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (1 Cor 8:9). Sanctification is held out not as an abstract ethical code, but as Christ himself. Jesus is our sanctification.

The Triumph of the Third Use

Jesus cited Deuteronomy 6:5 that we should love God with our whole being as the great commandment, words that might be considered part of, or an interpretation of, the Shema. This call to complete faith in God corresponds with Luther's interpreta-

tion of the First Commandment as a call to faith. By saying that the second command is like the first Jesus connected sanctification to faith (Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27).

The Greek word for like, ὁμοία, suggests that the second command shares in some way in the substance of the first; at least this is implied in 1 John 4:20–21, "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also." Challenged now is the long-held view of the therapeutic power of self-love. In other words one cannot love others unless and until one loves himself.[29] Christian life is vicarious in that we push ourselves to the side to benefit the other person. In asking us to love the neighbor God is asking of us nothing other than what he asks of himself and does. We are God's neighbors and instead of loving himself he loved us. This is the manifestation of the christological mystery.

Our loving God and our loving the neighbor are two sides of one coin and in this love the Trinitarian mystery is manifested. "In this is love perfected with us [that is, it reaches its intended conclusion, ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη, μεθ' ἡμῶν], that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world" (1 Jn 4:17). Love for the neighbor will be the standard for the final judgment.

Law in its third use is proleptic of that time when the second use will pass away and sanctification will replace justification as the determinative reality between God and man. Paul said as much, "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:7). We will see what we believed in and receive for what we hoped and so they will have outlived their purpose. Then the love by which we now love God and neighbor will reach its perfect and intended goal in the resurrection. Luther said as much at the end of the explanation to the second article, that we will serve God in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

An Appendix

Evangelicals see sanctification as living according to what they call "biblical principles," the ordinary things of life like marriage, family, business, finances, and diet. These principles do not define sanctification, lacking is the christological dimension of living and dying for others. (Nearly fifty years ago the late evangelical theologian Carl F. H. Henry sat in my living room speaking of the merits of the diet of the priests who were allowed to eat of the meat but not the fat of the sacrifices. Now the rage is the heavily bean loaded diet of Daniel. We might as well follow a diet of manna, quail, barley, fish, and wine—a menu not without appeal.) Who knows whether a life following biblical principles will result in success in business, marriage, and family, but this is not a life of sanctification, which cannot be measured by the quality and length of our lives.

Endnotes

[1] Thus these lines from Isaac Watts's hymn, "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," "In Him the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their father lost."

[2] Gerhard Forde's highly regarded exposition of the law and the gospel was not based on the atonement which he denied. Here again justification operates as an autonomous principle. Jack D. Kilcrease, "Atonement and

Justification in Gerhard Forde," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 76/3/4 (July/October 2012): 269–292.

[3] 1 Corinthians 6:4–6 "Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that 'an idol has no real existence,' and that "there is no God but one." For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

[4] The command here refers to more than our required submission to a word of God and in itself does not address the question of whether that word is law or gospel. See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 2:426.

[5] Mark 10:38–39 "But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' And they said to him, 'We are able.' And Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized.'"

[6] Hebrews 13:20–21. Ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν ἰησοῦν, καταρτίσαι ὑμᾶς ἐν παντὶ ἀγαθῷ εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν.

[7] Robert Kolb and James A. Nestigen, eds. *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 118.

[8] Melanchthon offered this definition: "The third office of the law in those who have been justified by faith, is this, that it teaches them concerning good works which one are pleasing works to God, and in commands certain works in which one's obedience to God is put into practice." "Lowell Green, "The 'Third Use of the Law' and Werner Elert's Position," *Logia* XXII/2 (Eastertide 2013): 28. Green claims Melanchthon introduced the phrase in his *Loci theologici* of 1535. Scott R. Murray argues that the phrase occurs a couple of times in the 1521 edition of *Loci communes*. Ibid., 36, n. 11.

[9] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1–4," trans. George V. Schick, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan 54 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 109.

[10] David P. Scaer, *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics* Vol. 5. (Saint Louis: The Luther Academy, 2008), 77–84.

[11] Green, "The 'Third Use of the Law," 33. Timothy J. Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 39.

[12] See Scott Murray, "The Third Use of the Law Revisited," *Logia* XXII 1/2 (Eastertide 2013). According to the Formula, "the word 'law' has one single meaning, namely, the unchanging will of God, according to which human beings are to conduct themselves in this life," but as saints and sinners, simul iustus et peccator, we see it differently.

[13] ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ, τετελειωμένη ἐν ἡμῖν. ἐστιν

[14] For good reason the law-gospel provided a scaffolding on which the neo-orthodox theologians Rudolph Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, and Emil Brunner constructed their existential theologies.

[15] Since in justifying sinners, God makes no distinction between male and female, the prohibitions against women and gay clergy and homosexual behavior were made inoperative by the gospel.

[16] The full reference is *lex autem semper accusat*, but absence of one word does not change the meaning,

[17] Here is the entire section: "Again, how can the human heart love God as long as it believes that he is terribly angry and that he oppresses us with temporal and eternal calamities? However, the law always accuses us; it always shows that God is angry. Therefore God is not loved until we grasp his mercy faith. Not until then can we become something who can be loved. (Apology IV:129)."

[18] David P. Scaer, *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace*, 80.

[19] See Charles A. Gieschen, "The Son as Creator and Source of the New Creation in Colossians," *The Restoration of Creation in Christ: Essays in Honor of Dean O. Wenthe*, ed. Arthur A. Just Jr. and Paul J. Grime (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 136–137. Gieschen goes on to say, "The 'new man' cannot be understood apart from Christ. Paul uses similar language of 'inner man' elsewhere as a reference to Christian in each Christian (Romans 7:22; Ephesians 3:16–17; and 2 Corinthians 4:16)."

[20] Scott A. Ashmon shows that the Scriptures do not necessarily follow this outline. "Preaching Law and Gospel in the Old Testament," *Lutheran Forum* 47/4 (Winter/Christmas 2013):12–15.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, "The Law of God," *Lutheran Quarterly* XXVI/4 (Winter 2013): 373–398.

[23] The March 2014 issue of *Lutheran Witness* 133/3 contains four articles on vocation: Paul Mumme,

"Persecuted but Not Forsaken"; Edie Wadsworth, "Leveling the Field"; Cheryl Naumann, "God is with You"; and Peter Bender, "More Than a Job."

[24] The episode of Jesus with the rich young man is reported by all three evangelists ((Mt 19:16–21; Mk 10:17–14; Lk 18:18–23). While the three accounts are similar, their differences are significant. Whereas Matthew uses the milder negative with the future, e.g., ouv foneu,seij, to set forth each commandment, Mark and Luke use the stronger negative with the subjunctive, Mὴ φονεύσῃς, so that it would carry this meaning "don't even think of think of killing." Since Jesus embodies divine authority, it was not necessary for him to use the stranger negative. Matthew also introduces the listing of the commands with the definite neuter article, Τὸ οὐ φονεύσεις, allowing that the several commandments constitute a whole (Jas 2:10). Even though the rich young man is anonymous in the three accounts, it is not unlikely that his identity is known to the readers and could be the evangelist himself. "And Jesus looking upon him loved him" (v.21) was hardly an observation by a third party. Another hint to the rich man being an evangelist is provided in v. 19. While Luke has only Mὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσῃς (18:20), "do not bear false witness," Mark adds μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς, "do not defraud." Richard Hicks proposes that the addition reinforces this gospel's theme of repentance and points to Jesus's "prophetic ability to detect inconspicuous wrong doing" ("Markan Discipleship according to Malachi: The significance of μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς in the Story of the Rich Man (Mark 10:17–22)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132/1:179–199). While Matthew and Luke provide a more positive picture of the man's intent to follow Jesus, by adding "do not deceive," Mark suggests that in acquiring his wealth the young man was guilty of deception. If the young man is the evangelist, this would be a self-confession of the kind of person he really was. Another self-reference is that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

[25] Matthew 19:27–29: "Then Peter said in reply, 'Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.'"

[26] ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν

[27] The RSV suggests an imperative by offering "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

[28] γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες, καθὼς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρμων ἐστίν

[29] Roy F. Baumeister, Jennifer D. Campbell, Joachim I. Krueger, and Kathleen D. Vohs, "Exploding the Self-Esteem Myth," *Scientific American* 292/1 (January 2005): 84–91; Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson, *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts* (New York: Mariner Books, 2008).